



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DHS AND USDA KICK OFF 2014 SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM LOCAL AGENCIES THROUGHOUT STATE ASSIST CHILDREN WITH NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

NASHVILLE, TN. – The Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) is partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and local agencies across the state to kick off the 2014 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This year's Summer Kick-off Event will be hosted by Shelby County Schools today in Memphis at 3:00pm in Peabody Park.

At the end of the school year many children anxiously await for the last bell to ring. Summer should be an exciting time for children to enjoy playtime with friends, a week at camp, a family vacation, or time at the pool. But for many children who receive free and reduced-price meals at school, summer can mean hunger. Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does a child's need for good nutrition.

The SFSP provides free meals and snacks to children of low income, ages 18 and under, when school is out for the summer. To celebrate the beginning of the statewide 2014 SFSP, the Summer Kick-off Event will provide information on how any community may have a successful program and meet the critical need for proper child nutrition when school is out. Shelby County Schools is the largest sponsor in the state and is projected to have more than 300 sites across the county. The system is also looking to extend its meal vending services to impoverished communities and children in need in surrounding counties.

"There has been great interest in the Summer Food Service Program this year," said DHS Commissioner Raquel Hatter. "We're excited to work with our community partners, new and established sponsors and federal partners in assisting families and children of low income have access to healthy meals during summer months."

Authorized and funded by Congress, and administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and each respective state, the SFSP helps to ensure that low-income children have opportunities throughout the summer to receive nutritious meals. To implement the SFSP in Tennessee, DHS contracts annually with local agencies that sponsor the preparation, delivery and serving of free meals and snacks to children at approved feeding sites in low-income areas.

In 2013, a total of 91 sponsors served more than 4 million meals at over 2,100 feeding sites statewide. Locations included parks, playgrounds, recreation centers, schools, churches, camps, public housing, and other places accessible to needy children.

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
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The deadline for new organizations to submit applications for sponsorship to the Tennessee Department of Human Services is at least 45 days prior to the anticipated start date of their program.

The criteria for the sponsorship are simple and straightforward, as outlined in the USDA Administrative Guidance for Sponsors Manual. Sponsoring organizations must agree to serve meals to all children in attendance regardless of their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

If your organization is interested in sponsoring the SFSP in your community, or becoming a feeding site under an existing sponsor, please contact TNSFSP.DHS@tn.gov.

For more information on the SFSP, please visit the USDA website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/>. For more information on the TN Summer Food Service Program, please visit our website: <http://www.tn.gov/humanserv/SFSP/index.shtml>.

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